Why The Roman Empire Really Fell

infotextmanuscripts.org/why_the_roman_empire_real_poem.html

Julius Caesar
The Roman geezer
Went to a public school,
He learned his Latin grammar,
And his Golden Mean and Rule.

He learned about geography,
And how the world was square,
He'd like to have done photography,
But they didn't teach it there.

"I'm sorry Caesar," said the teach',
"If we don't your wishes pander;
You'll have to go to Eton
If you want to use a camera".

"Why can't I learn about
The cinema, and things like that?"
"They haven't been invented yet,
You stupid little twat!"

"In any case," said teacher,
"That's enough of your derision,"
And for his cheek he made the lad
Do Roman long division.

Caesar studied the sums he was shown:
MMDC, CXLV
Divided by DCXV.
"Your answer at the bottom of the page,
And no remainder! Decimals you see, are all the rage".

He frowned at teach, but struggled on,
By Jupiter, it was a bore!
And when he'd finished one lot,
Teacher brought him more,
And more!

He got through school (though Jove knows how),
Then left to get a job,
This looks a nice one, Caesar thought,

I'll earn a good few bob.

He phoned up for an interview,
They told him to come down,
"It's that new building," said
The secretary, "here in town".

So Caesar donned his Sunday best
Next morning and left home,
He passed the interview
And was made Emperor of Rome.

First he went to the Senate
And they gave him an address,
"Caesar, our Empire's crumbling
But we know you'll do your best
To save us from those vile
Barbarians, and all the rest".

He listened for an hour
To the Senate and their prattle,
He made a speech, they cheered,
The next day he went into battle.

He led his armies in the field
In Africa, and Gaul,
They fought Egyptians, Vikings,
Cherokees...and beat 'em all.

But there was something wrong
With Rome, some inefficiency,
He couldn't quite pinpoint the cause,
Some odd deficiency.

A year passed, then another year,
And Rome began to crumble,
It wasn't falling down just yet,
But Caesar felt the rumble.

He felt the stirrings of unrest,
The Senate was afeared,
They knew, the Roman Senators,
The fate their Empire neared.

Then Caesar realised what was wrong:
"How blind can be a fool!
The same old problem faces Rome

As faced me once at school”.

The cause of inefficiency
Was there was no provision
In government departments to do
Simple long division.

Pay cheques and government accounts
Were in a right old state,
“You can’t do sums with letters,
Not at a productive rate”.

Caesar went to the Senate,
Said: “I’ve found the problem, men,
It’s simpler than you’d ever guess”.
“Pray tell us Caesar, then!”

“Our mathematics is outmoded,
All we have to do,
Is use the Arabic system,
Then Rome with thrive anew”.

There was a stirring on the benches,
Then a Senator
Said: “Do away with L.S.D.,
You cannot mean it sir?”

“Of course,” said Caesar,
“We’ve no choice, you surely will agree
That mighty Rome must keep abreast
Of new technology”.

“But Caesar, what you say
Is madness, don’t you realise
There’s too much vested interest
In Roman numbers lies?”

“Yes, what about the unions?”
Another member said,
“If we did that, they’d bring
The Empire crashing round our heads”.

“Hear hear!” another Senator:
“Employment is the issue.
We have to keep the scribes at work
Or they’ll complain a tissue”.

Caesar protested vainly,
“Yes, we must protect commuters,
But what’ll happen when our enemies
Invent computers?”

“Caesar,” a learnéd member said,
“Why must you talk in rhymes?”
“The choice is ours, we’ll perish
If we don’t move with the times.”

They brooded on his last
Pronouncement, then they all adjourned,
Uneasiness was spreading,
And the vested int’rests learned

Of Caesar’s sly plans for reform,
To Parliament by-pass;
“We have to stop this madman,”
Said the Banker, “Stop him fast!”

The Stockbroker nodded his head,
The Unionist agreed,
“We have to stop that man for good,
We have a common need”.

They roped in half the Senate,
And they plotted Caesar’s end,
The Ides of March came round,
And Caesar never had a friend.

They ambushed him, and knifed him,
And, as on the ground he lay,
He spied his pal, a tear sprang
To his eye: “Et tu, Brute?”

“I’m sorry Caesar, I’d no choice,
I’ve got a wife and kid,
High principles are fine
Until you need a coupla quid”.

So Caesar died, and was replaced
By bankers’ men, and puppets,
The show went on the same old way,
And then it rained, rained buckets.

Once might Rome was washed away,
By fast developing nations,
The city was sacked,
Its fabric cracked,
And there was no salvation.

Poor Caesar did his best, but in
The end his mates turned funny,
They stabbed him in the back,
The Empire fell, all cos of money.

And selfish people who ne’er acted
In the way they should,
But put their vested interests
Before the common good.